

ABSTRACTVALIDATION SYSTEM

5 A validation system is disclosed for validating an entity with whom a user intends to trade or exchange electronic information, for example over the Internet. The system includes validation means which are operable to obtain status details of the entity from third party validation sources, such as a certification authority, commercial register or the like, and indicator means operable to indicate the obtained status to the user substantially in real
10 time. The system preferably also includes means operable to determine the security of the communication medium between the user and the trading entity, in which case the indicating means is operable to give an indication of the security of the communication substantially in real time. The indicator is preferably a visual indicator, for example provided on a computer monitor, and consists, for example, of a series of colour signals
15 each indicative of a level of trustworthiness, preferably a "traffic light" type set of signals. Another aspect provides a system for generating a secure record of a transaction or exchange of electronic information with another entity including capture means operable to capture electronic data related to a transaction between a user and a trading entity and time stamp means operable to attach timing information to the captured data. This system
20 preferably includes storage means for storing the secure record and/or printing means operable to print the secure record. In the preferred embodiment, the secure record is preferably stored, either by the user or at a remote location controlled by a third party. The secure record can be accessed when desired from the storage location.